

**A "Clash of Civilizations" or a "Clash of Ignorance"?
Edward Said's *Clash of Ignorance* as a Critical Stance for
Reading Wajahat Ali's *The Domestic Crusaders* (2005)**

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Abstract

After the terrible events of September 11, 2001, Islamophobia increased and many Western people began to think of Muslims as terrorists. What made matters worse is the biased discourse of those orientalist who portrayed Islam as an enemy to the West. Samuel Huntington's thesis *The Clash of Civilizations* is an example of this discourse which demonstrated that the civilizational differences between Islamic and Western cultures can lead to many crises. This paper tries to refute the argument of such orientalist. It, also, examines some of Edward Said's views in his thesis *The Clash of Ignorance* which he wrote to invalidate Huntington's argument. Wajahat Ali's play *The Domestic Crusaders* is discussed to prove that the atrocious attacks of 9/11 do not validate Huntington's argument as some Western people assumed.

Introduction

As an aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, the relationship between Islam and the West has been significantly reconsidered. Islamophobia proliferated as more people, mainly in the West, started to stereotype Muslims as terrorists and regard Islam as the main threat to non-Muslims. What made matters worse is the biased discourse of some orientalist portraying Islam as an enemy to the West and depicting Arabs, in general, and Muslims, in particular, as ignorant, treacherous, and even bloodthirsty. Western Media, influenced as it is by such orientalist approach to Islam, has long propagated various misconceptions about Islam and Muslims.

One of the orientalist whose writings have been often revisited, particularly after September 11, is Samuel Huntington (1927-2008). Huntington's thesis *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993) stressed the civilizational differences between Islamic and Western cultures and illustrated how these differences can lead to many calamities and tragic events. Many Western writers, accordingly, started to argue whether the events of September 11 actually validate Huntington's thesis. On the other hand, anti-American sentiments spread in most of the Muslim countries after the events of September 11 as many Arabs and Muslims held America's unfair policy in the Middle East responsible for the terrorism that spread all over the world. Anti-orientalist scholars have condemned

the way Islam is regarded as a threat to the West, and they have disapproved of the stereotypical images such orientalists spread about Muslims. Furthermore, they have referred to the different relationships that existed between the two worlds across ages and called for a cultural dialogue between the two sides, especially after 9/11.

This paper investigates the relationship between ignorance and conflict, as reflected in ethnic American drama. Wajahat Ali's play *The Domestic Crusaders* (2005) is discussed, in this paper, for being one of the most prominent plays that accentuate the effects of the tragic events of 9/11 on Muslims and the way they are treated in America after these attacks. Besides, this play sheds light on the Islamophobia that afflicted a great number of people in America and the West after these events. The researcher uses this play as a counter-thesis that refutes Samuel Huntington's argument expounded in *The Clash of Civilizations*. Through resorting to Edward Said's thesis *The Clash of Ignorance* (2001), the researcher tries to invalidate Huntington's hypothesis that the conflict between the East and the West is, mainly, due to a clash of civilizations. Furthermore, this paper attempts to examine the role of American media, especially after 9/11. Finally, the researcher tries to prove how the marginalized may be oppressed by their own people as well as by other ethnic groups as they are subjugated by *the superior other*.

Re-visiting Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*

Samuel Huntington's "*The Clash of Civilizations*" appeared in the 1993 Summer issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine, then he developed it in book called *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). The term "clash of civilizations" had, formerly, been used by the American orientalist, Bernard Lewis, in a 1990 *Atlantic Monthly* article called "*The Roots of Muslim Rage*". Later, it was used by Huntington. In his *Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington discussed what he termed "a new phase" in world politics after the end of the cold war. He stated that the main reason of world conflict in the new world, in the post cold war era, will not be ideological, political or economic, but a cultural one and that a clash of civilizations will dominate international politics. Huntington also assured that this conflict will, predominantly, take place between nations and factions of different civilizations. He stated, "... principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the

future" (22). Huntington imagined a new civilization paradigm and divided the world into a number of major civilizations.

Huntington disapproved of the notion of one universal culture. He maintained that although modernization strengthens cross-cultural communication, it makes cultures analogous to each other. He, also, affirmed that "global communications are dominated by the West" and this is "a major source of the resentment and hostility of non-Western peoples against the West" (59). In other words, he believed that the Western influence is declining and that the world is becoming more modern but less Western. Huntington also emphasized the rising role of religion in international politics. He maintained that major religions "experienced new surges in commitment, relevance and practice by erstwhile casual believers" (96). Huntington thought that the absence of political ideologies was compensated by the increasing presence of religion. People "need new sources of identity, new forms of stable community, and new sets of moral precepts to provide them with a sense of meaning and purpose" (97). He believed that religion is able to replace politics and fulfill all these requirements. Huntington also highlighted the growing power and influence of some Asian countries as Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. He, also, affirmed that these Asian countries managed to develop themselves without sticking to Western values. He maintained, "Asian societies are decreasingly responsive to United States demands and interests and [are] increasingly able to resist pressure from the U.S. or other Western countries" (104). Huntington believed that many Islamic countries have, also, managed to get distinctive cultural identities by adhering to the principles of Islam. He affirmed that the deteriorating economic conditions, in most of the Islamic countries, as well as the tyrannical regimes that oppress people, especially youth, have led to the resurgence of Islam in these societies.

At the end of his thesis, Huntington suggested some pieces of advice that the American government must follow if it wants to protect America and its citizens from the danger of Muslims. The first advice is that America must lessen the number of immigrants and refugees into the country. Secondly, America has to adopt a policy of Americanization instead of that of multiculturalism. It also has to maintain a technological and military superiority over other countries. Besides, it has to reinforce its ties with the Western world by following the Atlanticist policy which encourages collaboration among the United States, Canada and Europe in the political, economic and defense fields in order to sustain the prosperity and security of these nations. In addition, America has to

hinder the military and economic development of Islamic-Confucian states and take advantage of the differences between these states. Furthermore, he maintained that if a World War III breaks out, due to the civilizational differences he stressed, then the USA must try to unite with Russia, Japan and Latin American states in order to be able to defeat the prospective Islamic-Confucian union.

Huntington's thesis was severely attacked because of its humiliating language of "us" and "them" and because of the way it portrays the West as superior and the East as inferior. Edward Said (1935-2003), the Palestinian scholar and university professor of English and Comparative Literature in Columbia University, is one of those scholars who refuted Huntington's argument in his thesis *The Clash of Ignorance*, which was published immediately after the attacks of September 11, and attracted the attention of a great number of people. This thesis, first, appeared in the October 22, 2001 edition of *The Nation*. It traces the roots of antipathy and resentment that are usually believed to describe the relationship between Western and Muslim worlds and accentuates cultural ignorance as the main reason of the clash. Thus, it refutes the argument of such orientalist who assume that they understand Islam such as Huntington and his counterparts, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul (1932-2018) and Bernard Louis (1916-2018). Said handled the relationship between the East and the West in a number of books such as *Orientalism* (1978), *Covering Islam* (1981) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)

The Domestic Crusaders (2005)

The Domestic Crusaders is a play written by the Pakistani American Playwright Wajahat Ali (1981-) in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It has been regarded by many critics as one of the most important plays in contemporary American Muslim theatre. The Pulitzer Prize nominated author, Mitch Berman, maintained that "[This] play is to Muslim American theater what *A Raisin in the Sun* is to African American theater" (Berman). It was also described by the Nobel Prize winning author, Toni Morrison, as a "brilliant Moving. Shapely. Clever. Funny" play (Morrison). *The Domestic Crusaders* stresses the troubles that a contemporary Pakistani American family has undergone in the United States of America after September 11, 2001. The play handles a day in the life of this multi-generational family-that gathers at the family home to celebrate the

twenty-first birthday of their youngest son- and presents six different perspectives regarding various issues in America after 9/11.

This multi-generational Pakistani American family consists of Hakim, the grandfather, a former Pakistani army officer who conceals a serious secret; Salman, the father, a middle-aged engineer who always tries to maintain his self-esteem and his human dignity in spite of all the pressures he endures in America and Kulsoom, the mother, who yearns for her native land, Pakistan, and always tries to pass the customs, traditions and ethics of her mother country to her children. For Hakim, Salman and Kulsoom, life in America, specifically in the post 9/11 period, does not live up to their expectations. They immigrated to America to lead a better life than the one they had in their mother land but they found a life completely different from the one they dreamt of.

Salman and Kulsoom have three adult children. The eldest one, Salahuddin, is a philanderer who loves to have relationships with blondes and beautiful Jewish girls. He is, also, a money-oriented person who is infatuated with the enterprise culture in America and dreams of making a fortune and becoming a successful business man. He is always dissatisfied with his family members' ways of thinking and with most of the decisions they make. The daughter, Fatima, is an activist who studies law. She is very proud of her Islamic identity and wears a headscarf, or a *hijab*, which her brother, Salahuddin, always derides. Fatima is having a relationship with an African American devout Muslim. The youngest son is Ghafour who tries to get his own way. He returns home, on holiday, and notifies his family members that he is not going to complete his study in the Faculty of Medicine. Instead, he is going to study history to correct the distorted image people, in America, have about Islam and to shatter the misconceptions they get about Muslims. He, also, wants to teach those radical Muslims the true nature of Islam. He assures his parents that they will be proud of him when they " get the blessings of [his] work" (55). Ghafour's decision shocks the family members, especially the parents, who want their son to be a doctor in order to improve their conditions as immigrants in the USA. As the family members endeavor to convince Ghafour to change his view-point, each one of them tells his own story. These different stories, not only show us their real personalities and explain their perspectives in life in general, but they also shed light on the painful experiences they have suffered in the USA and the oppression they have faced after 9/11.

Deconstructing Orientalist Misconceptions and Stereotypes

The way the majority of the American people, in *The Domestic Crusaders*, regard Muslims is based on an orientalist understanding of Islam, in which it is regarded as a threat to the West. Through this Pakistani family, Ali shows how Muslims have become victims of preconceptions and overgeneralizations after 9/11. Most of the American people pigeonhole them just because they are Muslims. Their American neighbors are afraid of them and regard them as "freaks" (16). They think that dealing with them will endanger their life and threaten their stability. The American young child was very afraid to approach Hakim in the supermarket because he believed that he is Osama Ben Ladin, or one of his relatives, since Hakim grows a beard and wears clothes similar to those of Ben Ladin. Fatima is, also, regarded as a Muslim fanatic because of the *hijab* she wears. Such American people are influenced by those orientalists who give general judgments about Muslims and do not understand the true nature of Islam. Anti-orientalist scholars believe that these orientalists, such as Huntington and his peers, do not dig deep into Islam. In his thesis, *The Clash of Ignorance*, Edward Said asserted that Huntington did not perceive the true nature of Islam and the "internal dynamics and plurality" of Muslim civilization (11). Robert Marks, also, assures that Huntington's argument is full of overgeneralizations about Islamic cultures and Muslims (101-104). The sweeping overgeneralizations that most of the American people make about this Pakistani family, in *The Domestic Crusaders*, show how the majority of the Americans are influenced by the orientalists' biased discourse which disregards Islam's true nature and ignores its multiplicity as Said asserted.

As the attacks of 9/11 led many politicians and decision-makers, like the Italian Prime Minister Silvia Berlusconi and the Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to use the crisis of 9/11 as an evidence to prove the unassailability of Huntington's argument, as Edward Said mentioned in *The Clash of Ignorance* (11), they had the same impact on many American officials in *The Domestic Crusaders*. These attacks have led them to assault Islam severely, regard it as a terrorist religion and consider all Muslims as extremists. What happened to Ghafour, in the airport while he was going to travel to his university, is a clear example. He was racially profiled, humiliated and dehumanized by the American officials just because he is a Muslim. The airport officials suspected Ghafour because he was wearing a turban, having a beard and holding a book called *Jihad and Terrorism*. Accordingly, he

was searched thoroughly and all his belongings were checked painstakingly. All the passengers were standing and watching "the Muslim mammal zoo exhibit" (40). He was sure that the passengers felt safe when the Muslim person was "being sanitized" (41). No one else was examined except a young black man and a middle aged white person who had an Eastern European name; hence they were, also, suspected and searched meticulously. Ghafour tells his family that the Americans practice discrimination against them even in food. The food that was presented to him and all the other Muslim passengers, on the plane, as the "Moslem meal" had "no taste"(37). Even though they allowed Muslims to bring food with them on the plane, they examined it under "some antiterrorist lens" (38). They, also, asked Muslims not to accompany with them any sharp objects. Therefore, they took from Ghafour his nail cutter. The way Ghafour was dealt with, in the airport, and the discrimination he was exposed to, show how far the majority of the American people, after 9/11, became influenced by the orientalist approach to Islam. This situation, also, shows how Muslims are regarded as enemies to the West after the trauma of September 11, 2001. As Kishore Mahbubani maintained, the act of perceiving the 'other' as a 'threat' rather than a 'challenge' is very dangerous and leads to serious problems in intercultural communication (12-14).

Surprisingly, although the members of this Pakistani American family suffer from marginalization and stereotyping by *the superior other*, they tend to marginalize and stereotype other people. Ali used some situational ironies that show how people who suffer from discrimination are, sometimes, the same ones who practice discrimination against others. Fatima is attacked by her mother and her brother because of the *hijab* she wears as well as the university demonstrations which she organizes. Moreover, she is rejected by her mother's Pakistani-American friends because she does not want to marry any of the bridegrooms they choose for her. Besides, this Pakistani-American family does not want Fatima to marry the man she loves because he is a black African-American young man. Furthermore, Salahuddin does not want to marry a Pakistani girl. Instead, he wants to marry a white-skinned American one. There is also a situational irony in the attitude of Khulsoom towards the Afghani. She feels angry when their American neighbors think they are Afghani, not Pakistani, because she thinks they are superior to the Afghani. She complains, "We're not those Afghanis. We're Pakistanis! Why don't you tell them, Fatima? I've lived here long enough. They should at least give respect and know who I am. At least not call me some Afghani"(16).

American Media and the Negative Representations of Muslims

The Domestic Crusaders shows how far the American media follows the footsteps of Huntington and such orientalists who try to distort the image of Islam and spread misconceptions about Muslims. After September 11, American media began to talk about 'political Islam', 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'Islamism', that Huntington referred to in his *Clash of Civilizations*. The hate speech, which the American media presents, leads to most of the verbal and physical harassment and antagonistic actions from which Muslims suffer in America. In *The Clash of Ignorance*, Said stressed the dangerous role of media and how it can direct the public opinion when he referred to the British weekly magazine, *The Economist*, in its issue of September 22-28. He felt sorrowful that *The Economist*, which he regards as a "sober" magazine, did not avoid generalization and eulogized Huntington for what Said described "cruel and sweeping, but nonetheless acute" opinions about Islam. The journal assumed that the billion Muslims of the world are "so convinced of the superiority of their culture, and obsessed with the inferiority of their power" (12). Said was really astonished and he wondered whether this journal carried out a survey with a large number of Muslims in the world to come up with this conclusion. He affirmed that this journal has issued its judgment according to an interview it conducted with a few number of Muslims which is not enough to offer a reliable judgment. This few number of Muslims does not represent all the Muslims of the world and cannot speak for them.

The speech of the American media, in *The Domestic Crusaders*, is loaded with the "vocabulary of gigantism and apocalypse" which Edward Said referred to in his *Clash of Ignorance* and which tries to "inflame the reader's indignant passion as a member of the West" as Said asserted (12). The British weekly magazine, *The Economist*, which Said referred to in his article, is similar to the various journals and television programs that Wajahat Ali presents in *The Domestic Crusaders*. All of them show how American media plays a vital role to direct the public opinion against Muslims. Ghafour, Fatima and Salman always turn off the radio and the television angrily because they reject the offensive hate campaign the American media launches against Arabs and Muslims. Salman shouts, "Tired of this goddamn heat... Goddamn media. Same nonsense every day! Blame Islam. Blame Muslims. Blame immigrants for everything! Tired of the daily propaganda!". He, also, describes it as "the worthless media" (23). These words correspond with what Edward Said affirmed in *The Clash of Ignorance* that is unfair "to judge from the steady amount of

hate speech and actions plus reports of law enforcement efforts against Arabs, Muslims and Indians all over the country" (13). Fatima gets disgusted when the American announcer was discussing the issue of "The War against Extremism" with the "world-renowned, respected academic experts on Islam and the Middle East" (5), because they always relate it to Islam and Muslims and urge people to lay the blame on Muslims as if extremists must be only Muslims. Such announcers think they help America in its war "against its haters, despoilers [and] destroyers", as Edward Said stated, but, in fact, they "will separate us into divided armed camps" as Said also assured in his *Clash of Ignorance* (12).

Furthermore, *The Domestic Crusaders* shows how the American media uses multiple criteria in judging people and issues. While it regards the majority of Muslims, after 9/11, as terrorists, it does not consider those Americans who colonize Iraq as imperialists at all. It also does not regard what they do in Iraq, i.e., killing its people, raping its women, and trying to create problems among its people for the sake of getting influence and power, as terrorist activities at all. Fatima wonders how such people are Christians, "How Christian is it to bomb innocent civilians?" (48). Hakim believes that these American colonizers are similar to those British and European ones who are willing to do anything for the sake of power. He asserts, "Just like the British—typical colonizers, imperialists, just like the *ferengi* Europeans. Come in—rape, loot, destroy, turn brother against brother and countryman against countryman just for *dawlat* and power. Man never changes" (47). However, the American media does not attack such people or condemn their ferocious acts at all.

Media is considered an efficient agent of the government since it tries to serve its interests and promote its policy. As Edward Said mentioned in *Covering Islam*, what is presented in the American media "is defined in terms of whether it is for or against American interests" (42). The American media, in *The Domestic Crusaders*, claims that the Islamophobia that afflicted non-Muslims after 9/11 leads America to adopt a counter-terrorism strategy in order to defend its citizens :

Female commentator: (*Voice-over*) This war will end only when these monsters and terrorists and Al-ka-eeda and fundamentalist regimes renounce their hatred and extremism and learn to love and embrace democracy and freedom and American values, such as tolerance and separation of church and state and, God willing, good hygiene, ha!

Male commentator: (*Voice-over*) Ann, how do you expect them to love us when we're invading their countries and bombing their homes?

Female commentator: (*Voice-over*) That's the problem! They don't understand. They just don't get it. We're *not* invading them. Hello, stupids! We're *liberating* you!

Fatima: (*Turns off the TV*) Okay... I just... I just don't even know what to say. Is she serious? Do commentators on TV actually hear themselves when they talk? They must be insane. That's it. I won't watch the news anymore. (92-93)

The female commentator's opinion is reminiscent of Said's words about those Western colonizers who assume that they do not invade other nations, but travel to these nations to enlighten and liberate its people, i.e. the white man's burden. Said maintains, "Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate" (*"Blind Imperial Arrogance"* 14).

In *The Clash of Ignorance*, Said affirms that if we look at the population of many western countries, we will find that Muslims constitute a very large number of the population of these countries (13-14). The play emphasizes Said's view and sheds light on the great number of Asian and African Muslims, who were born and brought up in the USA, like Fatima, Ghafour and Salman, and consider themselves American citizens that have the same rights and duties of the native American people and share the same future with the other American citizens. This shows that Islam is "no longer on the fringes of the West but at its center" as Said asserted (14). Hence, Salman and Khulsoom were disgusted when they heard the announcer, who was commenting on the speech of the American president, talking about American Muslims as if they were foreigners. They were, really, overwhelmed with anger because they elected this president as the majority of the American citizens did. They trusted him and, hence, voted for him, though, afterwards, he did not live up to their expectations. According to them, he was a president that did not respect or trust Muslims or immigrants:

The television: (*Voice-over*) The president has asked the country—and Congress—to approve a further one hundred billion dollars in the ongoing fight against extremism.

Salman: Look at this nonsense. This Amreekan news. Fair and

Balanced, ha!

Khulsoom: Then why do you watch it?

Salman: We must know, as Muslims, as Americans, what these people think of us. Look—such blatant lies. Our president — *your* president—you voted for him!

Khulsoom: I only voted for him because they told me he is pro-Muslim! And the entire community—(88)

These words show how American Muslims are deeply rooted in the American society. They can never be isolated or separated from this society, as Huntington called for in his *Clash of Civilizations*, because they share a lot with the rest of the American citizens. As Edward Said affirmed in his *Clash of Ignorance*, all of us "Westerners and Muslims and other alike swim in the "deep waters of tradition and modernity". As long as these "waters are part of the ocean of history, trying to plow or divide them with barriers is futile". Said believed that some Western countries might find it "threatening" to have a great number of Muslims on their lands because they remember the first great Arab-Islamic conquests, which began in the 7th century and which destroyed the ancient unity of the Mediterranean and led to the collapse of the Christian Roman empire (14). Ghafour intends to shatter such fears when he becomes a history teacher. He wants to show non-Muslims that Islam does not call for war or destruction, on the contrary, it calls for peaceful co-existence between people from different religions and cultures as Allah stated in the Holy Kur'an, "Oh mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you"(49-13). This is, in fact, one of the important messages that Wajahat Ali tries to convey in *The Domestic Crusaders*. According to Michael Foucault, power relations lead to the possibility of change and resistance (Foucault Live 386). The oppressive measures Ghafour has undergone at the airport and the several injustices both he and his fellow Muslims face in America after 9/11, were not only repressive but productive as well. They led him to decide to be a history teacher to clear the distorted images some Westerners have about Islam and Muslims as well as to show those Muslim fanatics the true nature of Islam. This shows how power relations between individuals are not reduced to master-slave or oppressor-victim relations, but they are productive as Foucault stated. Hence, power "induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" as Foucault affirmed (Power/Knowledge 119). In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault stated that

"Where there is power, there is resistance" (95). This largely applies to Fatima since the oppression from which she suffers as a Muslim American, after 9/11, led her to organize rallies and demonstrations in the university to protest against the injustice that Muslims face in the American society. Besides, she wants to be a lawyer to defend Islam and shatter the misconceptions about Muslims. In other words, Fatima's attitude verifies Foucault's opinion that power is a productive factor since it has positive effects (Power/Knowledge 141-142).

Condemning Radicalism in *The Domestic Crusaders*

The Domestic Crusaders condemns those radical Muslims who distort the image of Islam and cause some people to believe that it is a religion of violence. Ghafour, the mouthpiece of the writer, attacks those Muslim extremists who use these "millions to teach their perverted version of Islam". The Taliban, for example, think it is "Halal and Islamic" to strike and lock up their women. In doing so, they think they satisfy God (49). Hence, he wants to be a history teacher, not only to show non-Muslims the true nature of Islam, but also to teach these radical Muslims that Islam has ever been the religion of forgiveness, justice and peace, not one of violence and aggression. He wants to make all these people "unlearn all the misinformation they've been force-fed their whole lives about Muslims, Islam, Arabs, and the Middle East (55).

Edward Said lamented the fact that the terrorist attacks of 9/11, which were carried out by "a small group of deranged militants" who do not represent Islam, have given the chance to Huntington's views to spread. He was grieved that these attacks, which were committed by "a tiny band of crazed fanatics for criminal purposes" have been used as a proof to validate Huntington's argument (*Clash of Ignorance* 11).

In addition, *The Domestic Crusaders* stresses the idea that terrorists can be the followers of any religion, not only Islam as Huntington assumed. They can be Jews, Christians or Muslims. Abu Gharib's prison was referred to, in *The Domestic Crusaders*, when the mother was advising her son to be careful so that what happened for him in the airport would not take place again. She was afraid that the officials may think he is a terrorist and send him to this prison which made all the world attack the Americans severely for their barbarity. These extremists, who tortured Arabs and Muslims in this prison, refute the argument of Huntington and such orientalist that terrorists are only Muslims. Edward Said stressed the same idea in *The Clash of Ignorance*. He maintained that while there are some Muslim fanatics, as Osama Ben Laden and his

followers, there are also some fanatics in the West such as "the Branch Davidians or the disciples of the Rev. Jim Jones at Guyana or the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo..." (12). Said assured that extremism can put an end to, even, the most civilized countries. He referred to Joseph Conrad who could have perceived that the difference between "civilized London" and "the heart of darkness" rapidly vanished in "extreme situations" and that the great European civilization could disintegrate and turn into "the most barbarous practices without preparation or transition"(13).

Throughout the play, the dramatist attempts to emphasize the fact that Islam is not a racist religion and that it does not call for extremism. He at times does this directly, and at other times symbolically. For example, Hakim tells his grandson that when Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) was given the freedom to choose between water, wine and milk, he selected milk because "it was the moderate choice. The Middle Path". Hence, the grandfather has insisted throughout his life, to have milk, besides honey and dates, in his daily meals because "These are the traditions of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him!" (21). Through the episode of milk, which is a symbol of the middle path, Ali wants to advise Muslims to avoid extremism in everything and follow the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that Ali also sheds light on his qualities, every now and then, as a way of countering negative stereotyping of Muslims.

Highlighting the Clash between the Elites and the Masses.

The Domestic Crusaders accentuates the idea that the actual clash is not between civilizations, as Huntington claimed in his *Clash of Civilizations*, but between the elites and the masses. Throughout the play, Ali points out how the plans and aims of those Muslim fanatics, like al-Qaida leaders, for example, are completely different from those of common Muslims. All the members of the Pakistani family, in *The Domestic Crusaders*, condemn those extremists because they have led the majority of Americans to think that all Muslims are bloodthirsty, merciless and uncivilized. Accordingly, they have distorted the image of Islam and led to all these traumatic experiences from which Muslims and Arabs have suffered after September 11. Hence, Salman assures that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 did not only destroy the two towers and the Pentagon, but they also destroyed the lives and dreams of Muslims in America: "When those two towers fell, we fell with them"(83).

Similarly, since Al Qaida does not represent Islam, as Wajahat Ali asserts in this play, such Christian extremists of Abu

Gharib's prison, do not represent common Christians. As the play refers to those Christian fanatics who kill and torture innocent people in Abu Gharib's prison, it also sheds light on those noble Christians who want to go to Iraq to teach people about Christianity. Ghafour believes that such people are "well-intentioned" ones since they want to perform a good mission; i.e, to convey the real teachings of Christianity to people. Hence, they are different from those greedy American Christians who go to Iraq to colonize it (47). Thus, Wajahat assures that the beliefs of those Muslim and Christian extremists do not reflect those of common Muslims and Christians. The anti-orientalist scholar, Benjamin Barber, also accentuates the huge difference between the agenda of the leaders and that of the common people in both the Islamic and Western worlds. He states, "The difference between bin Laden's terrorists and the poverty-stricken third-world constituents he tries to call to arms, however, is the difference between radical Jihadic fundamentalists and ordinary men and women concerned to feed their children and nurture their religious communities" (xv).

Likewise, such orientalist, as Huntington and his peers, do not represent the common people in the West. Many anti-orientalist scholars believe that the opinions that Huntington expressed in *The Clash of Civilizations* do not express the views of the common American citizens, but those of the American elites. They assert that the plans and objectives of the American politicians are completely different from those of the common American citizen. Gilles Kepel, for example, thinks that Ayman al-Zawahiri's discourse, in *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, is very similar to that of Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations*. He maintains that Al-Zawahiri's book is a "jihadist reading of the clash of civilizations" (99). Both discourses are used - by the Western decision-makers as well as the leaders of al-Qaida network - to enrage the common people. Oliver Roy also believes that such Muslim extremists adopt the same view-point of Samuel Huntington and believe that the conflict in the Middle East is, necessarily, a result of the clash of civilizations (9).

Exposing The United States' Double Standards Policy in the Middle East

The Domestic Crusaders highlights the idea that the West is, to a great extent, responsible for the hostile relations with the Islamic countries. As mentioned earlier, Huntington and his peers affirmed that the conflict between the East and the West is mainly due to civilizational differences, and ignored the fact that it is the policy of the USA, towards

the Muslim countries and the East, which leads to all this hatred and resentment. Huntington also ignored the long history of Western colonization for some Eastern and Muslim countries which led to the great hatred for the West. Hence, it is not logical to ignore all these elements and talk about the civilizational difference as being the main element of conflict between America and Muslim countries.

The Domestic Crusaders condemns the United States for its multiple criteria and because of its support for some tyrannical governments in the Middle East. Wajahat Ali does not defend terrorists or justify their deeds, but he asserts, in this play, that America is, to a great extent, responsible for what happened in the trauma of 9/11. Ghafour believes that these terrorists might have suffered from violence, hatred, oppression and invisibility, so they exploded themselves to avenge their sufferings. He thinks that people, who feel sheltered, do not commit such suicidal acts. Ghafour's and Fatima's words stress the fact that hatred begets hatred and violence begets violence:

Ghafur: ...usually people with food and homes don't go around blowing themselves up.

Sal: Except terrorist suicide bombers—

Fatima: Or a people so brutally oppressed they have nothing left to lose—

Ghafur: Except their lives, or maybe their humanity, I don't know—(42)

Ali's perspective corresponds with that of many anti-orientalist scholars. Fouad Ajami, for example, believes that the unjust policy of the USA is the main reason that has led to the rise of the anti-American sentiments and the spread of terrorism all over the world. Ajami thinks that Huntington stressed the religious and civilizational factors as being the main elements of conflict between nations and ignored the unfair policy of the United States which has caused the hostility between America and the East (7-8). Shireen Hunter also assures that the conflict between the West and the Muslim world is not due to civilizational differences, as Huntington assumed, but to the USA multiple criteria in the Middle East and to the political and economic inequalities between the two worlds of 'haves' and 'have nots'(19-20). Graham E. Fuller also maintains that America is attacked severely all over the world because of its policy in the Middle East (54). Moreover, all these scholars assert that the increasing anti-American feelings are not restricted to the Islamic countries but they also began to spread in Europe,

not because of America's civilizational values but because of its policy in the Middle East. However, America's unfair policy does not justify the appalling acts that these terrorists commit in order to take revenge, because as Said maintained "You cannot continue to victimize someone else just because you yourself were a victim once—there has to be a limit"(*The Myth of 'The Clash of Civilizations'*).

It is worthy to note that some anti-orientalist scholars assert that Huntington wrote his *Clash of Civilizations* to serve the personal interests of some American rulers and decision-makers. They also maintain that Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* has promoted US foreign and defense policy. In this regard, the anti-orientalist thinker, Hans Kung, for example, points out that Huntington was an advisor to the Pentagon in 1994. His prediction, that a third world war might break out, satisfied those American munitions-makers and served US arms industry. Kung also believes that since America's old rival, the Soviet Union, had vanished, some politicians and thinkers, like Huntington, try to create another enemy for the United States. Such people follow "a bloc based Cold War mentality" (103). They think that war is essential for sustaining the technological and military supremacy of the West. John Ikenberry also affirms that Huntington's slogan, in this thesis, is "long live the new Cold War" (163).

Noam Chomsky, to whom Salahuddin alludes as being the one who urged Fatima and Ghafour to think in such a revolutionary way (42), also maintains that America always tries to search for an enemy to maintain its military supremacy. He points out that, for fifty years, the White House used to present a petition to the Congress asking for an enormous budget for the American army, and it used the Soviet threat to convince the Congress members. After the end of the Cold War, the Soviet threat disappeared. Hence, another threat must exist in order to justify the need for a huge budget for the army. Accordingly, the Islamic threat was created by Huntington and other orientalists to promote the defense policy of the United States. Accordingly, Huntington's thesis is actually an enemy discourse that tries to create new enemies in order to encourage the security procedures that America takes and justify the wars that America wages against Islamic countries ("*Clash of Civilizations?*"). Mahmood Monshipouri and Gina Petonito, also, agree with Chomsky that, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington was searching for another enemy instead of the Soviet Union after the Cold War Era (773-792).

Re-thinking The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The United States is often criticized for its pro-Israeli policy. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been reconsidered after September 11. Some people, in the West, have regarded this conflict as an expected result of the clash of civilizations that Huntington referred to in his thesis. *The Domestic Crusaders* shows how it is illogical to disregard the Israeli colonization for Palestine, ignore the long suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli colonizers and talk about the civilizational differences as being the main elements of conflict between Israel and the Arabs as some people, in the West, have believed after the trauma of 9/11.

The Domestic Crusaders confirms that Muslims and Arabs are not anti-Semites, but they are anti-Zionists. Hakim affirms that Arabs can not be anti-Jewish because Judaism is a religion sent down by God, but they are against those Israelis who execute massacres everyday in Palestine and murder the defenseless Palestinian civilians. He maintains, "They are... People of the Book, Allah has said it is lawful to marry their women. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, but... they just—... Just—they have never respected us and our ways—" (26-27). Salman also assures that he does not hate the Jews and wonders why the Americans accuse them of being anti-Semitic whenever they attack the atrocities that Israel commits in Palestine, "I'm not an anti-Semite. This country conveniently calls us anti-Semites anytime we criticize Israel for anything. I don't hate the Jews or Judaism" (27). Ghafour is also very sad that some people, in America, regard Muslims as Jew-haters who are ready to explode themselves, at any time, to kill as many Jews as they can, "Americans, and these Christians here, thinking each and every Muslim is a Jew-hater, about to go berserker-rage and blow himself and everyone else up. No one knows anything" (49). Fatima does not hate the Jews, nor does she hate the Israelis because of the civilizational differences that Huntington stressed in his thesis. She abhors those Zionists who hate Muslims and Arabs, oppress the Palestinian people, own Hollywood, and hence, direct the Media which distorts Muslims and Arabs (27). Fatima, also, condemns The United States' support for Israel and ridicules the false images that America portrays for both the Palestinian and the Israeli. When Salahuddin tells her that he can marry a Jewish girl if he admires her, Fatima, sarcastically, replies:

You'd probably let your wife teach your kids that the Palestinians are rock-throwing terrorists. And every Arab kid is a potential ticking human time bomb. And the Israelis (*in a baby-*

like voice) obviously are poor, defenseless innocents who just happen to have one of the world's strongest militaries, nuclear capabilities, M16s, and Apache helicopters thanks to direct support from your United States of America! (28)

Not only does the above quote expose America's double-standards policy in the Middle East, but it also highlights the stereotypical image that the West portrays for the Palestinians as terrorists as well as the bias and distorted media coverage of the Palestinian -Israeli Conflict.

A Clash of Interests, not a Clash of Civilizations

The Domestic Crusaders stresses the fact that the conflict between nations is, mainly, due to a clash of interests, not a clash of civilizations as Huntington asserted. Salman thinks that Muslims are blameworthy and that they deserve their current situations. They, only, care about their own interests and disregard those of their counterparts in the other Muslim countries:

Muslims—we deserve this. Useless. All of them—Saudis—whoring their oil in exchange for their Amreekan allowance. Turkey—the “Sick Man of Europe”—trying to be more European than Europe. The Iranian Americans—HA!—*finally* Protesting *something*! They're only out there because they think all the Macy's sold out of blue contact lenses. These Yemeni Arabs, so pious with their liquor stores at every street corner. Wahabbis...Spreading their Wahabbism with their millions to the Taliban, and Pakistan...(48)

Fatima blames Muslims who did not do anything to help the Afghani and save them from the British colonizers and Taliban. Fatima, here, is the spokesperson of the writer who thinks that if any Muslim country is in a dilemma, it is the responsibility of all Muslim countries to support it. She wonders, "What did we do? How many did anything? How many Muslims protested the Taliban?" (18). The Muslim countries' attitude during the American war against Afghanistan also validates Fatima's words. In this war, the United States was supported by some Islamic countries as Turkey and Iran. The Gulf War is another striking example which shows that the conflict between nations is, primarily, due to a clash of interests, not a clash of civilizations. Fouad Ajami, laments the fact that the alliance made against Saddam Hussein, during that time,

included many Islamic countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia (7-8). Chomsky admits that there is a clash between 'the West' and 'the rest'. Nevertheless, he assures that America has a conflict with whoever supports the poor. They can be Catholics in Latin America or Communists in Afghanistan. Chomsky's words show that the conflict between America and the "rest" is a clash of interests, not a clash of civilizations as Huntington assumed ("*Chomsky in India*").

The ending of the play also proves that the conflict between people is the result of a clash of interests, not a clash of civilizations. The play ends with the shocking secret which Hakim discloses to his family members and which also refutes Huntington's argument in *The Clash of Civilizations*. After India and Pakistan got their independence from Britain in 1947, a war broke out between the Hindu, Sikh and Muslims. Hakim states, "Each claimed the land as their own. Some fought for religion, or for politics. Others fought out of petty rivalry, or mere jealousy. Sikh killed Muslim. Muslim killed Hindu. Hindu killed Muslim. I kill your brother, you kill my family. I burn your store, you burn my house " (97-98). Some of Hakim's Muslim friends were killed at the hands of the Hindu. Muslims informed the Police that did not do anything. Hence, they endeavored to kill the Hindu in order to avenge the death of their friends. Hakim, the voice of wisdom in this play, took part in some of these crimes. Hindu, Sikh and Muslims belong to the same land and have the same culture. The war did not break out between these people, who share the same history and land, because of the civilizational differences that Huntington stressed in his thesis, but because of a clash of interests. The ending of the play also emphasizes the fact that regarding the other as an enemy, or a threat, may lead to crimes and catastrophes. Furthermore, it demonstrates that when the State is absent, people may resort to violence to fight for their rights. Fatima, Ghafour and Salahuddin were completely baffled when they heard this secret and began to rebuke their grandfather. Each one of them suggested a solution that Hakim must have chosen instead of killing others. Besides, this ending shows how the new generations of Muslims reject violence and believe in peace and tolerance. Moreover, it highlights the message that Ali tried to convey through most of the situations of the play; i.e. violence begets violence and hatred begets hatred. The dramatist used flashback at the end of the play. Besides providing some background information about Hakim's past history and giving us a deeper insight into his character, this flashback highlights one of the issues that the play proves, i.e. that the conflict between people is, largely, due to a clash of interests, not a clash of civilizations.

The Importance of Civilizational Dialogue

Similar to Edward Said and those anti-orientalists who think that there must be a dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially after 9/11, Ghafour thinks that Muslims must go to churches and "do some interfaith" dialogue. He believes that even if he does not succeed, he will be satisfied that he tried. Although Salman is proud of his son and believes that he deserves to be "the president of the Muslim College students" (50), he does not encourage him to leave the Faculty of Medicine and become a history teacher to dispel the misconceptions about Islam. In this regard, Salman is similar to those passive Muslims that the play attacks. He wants his son to be a doctor in order not to suffer from the same trials and tribulations his parents have faced in America. He warns his son, "Well, as long as I pay the bills—you are becoming a damn doctor. ... So they can never cut you down, or humiliate you, or take away your hard-earned rewards. No son of mine (looks at SAL)—sons of mine—is going to become some third-rate, penniless professor..." (53). Hakim tries to convince his grandson to change his opinion because his family depends on him to change their conditions, "Your father, he... planned everything, Beta. He had such dreams for you. The first doctor of the family. The family in Pakistan, everyone here, they all expect so much out of you" (58). But Ghafour's insistence on his decision enrages his family members. His mother, who gets irritated when she hears his decision, shouts, "... these are my awlad. Can't believe I gave birth to them. Instead of listening to their parents and taking care of them, they want them to grieve and die as fast as possible, so they can have their freedom—..." (56). So, not only does the play attack those self-centered Muslims who think only of their own interests, but it also condemns those passive Muslims who do not do anything to shatter the misconceptions about their religion. Ghafour is grieved that Muslims in America, live in isolation and do not cooperate to do anything to change the image people have about them. He is, also, sad because he does not know his Muslim neighbors although they have been living in America for fifteen years. But, Wajahat Ali is different from those passive Muslims who live in isolation. He decided to write *The Domestic Crusaders* to dispel the misconceptions about his religion and to expose those radical Muslims who give people a distorted image about Islam. He also portrayed the main hero of the play, Ghafour, as a valiant Muslim who decides to take the risk to clear the misinformation about his religion. Ghafour believes in the importance of intercultural dialogues and realizes that his task is not an easy one, so he decides to study history in order to equip himself well for this mission.

Salahuldin is an example of those passive Muslims who do not do anything to change the falsified image that the majority of American people have about Islam. He is, completely, different from Ghafour and Fatima. He always makes fun of his sister's friends who take part with her in the university protests and calls them "ninja" sisters (9). However, Fatima always urges him to help them correct the misinformation some people have about Islam, instead of attacking her and her friends and making fun of them. But Salahuddin believes that spending much time in such activities is "insane" (10).

The attitudes of these family members towards discrimination show their different characters. The ways they react to what happened to Ghafour in the airport, for example, are dissimilar. Fatima damns those narrow-minded Americans who judge the person by his appearance. The father, also, gets furious when he hears these details and accuses the Americans of being "Bastards! Idiots—totally incompetent" (38). On the contrary, the mother lays the blame on her son who did not shave his beard as she asked him to do before, as well as for wearing a skullcap and taking a nail cutter with him because, in this way, he gave the Americans the opportunity to doubt him. Besides, she feels afraid that the FBI may, also, suspect him and think he is a terrorist. Although the mother is not a passive woman, in this particular situation, she turns to be very passive. She does not object to the bad treatment of the Americans to her son and to the other Muslim passengers in the airport. She does not, even, curse the discriminators, instead, she blames her son for being so careless and asks him to follow the rules strictly in order not to be hurt. Salahuddin is indifferent to the discrimination that his brother underwent in the airport and talks as if he is not suffering from any racial problems in America. He, sarcastically, lays the blame on Noam Chomsky who led his brother and sister to think in such a way. Wajahat Ali condemns such passive Muslims who do not realize the importance of civilizational dialogues and how they are, really, important to improve the relationships between the East and the West and build bridges of communication between them.

The Play's Title Epitomizes the Family Members' Struggle to Assert their Identities in Post 9/11 America

Each member, or, crusader, in this Pakistani American family, exerts every effort to assimilate into the American society after 9/11 and, at the same time, maintain the Islamic values he learned from his parents and ancestors. Each member strives, or, crusades, to have a distinctive identity and realize his own ambitions. The title of the play shows how the members of this Pakistani family have conflicting views

and different personalities. It is an ironic and, at the same time, metaphoric title. It is metaphoric since the members of this Pakistani-American family are portrayed as crusaders, or fighters, who struggle to prove that their view-points are correct. It is also ironic because the word "crusaders" may be understood as the invaders who try to occupy another country, and the word "domestic" may describe the native citizens of a country. Hence, it is ironic to find citizens who try to invade their own country. Wajahat Ali states that he used this ironic title to refer to the long-standing hostility between the East and the West. It shows how the native American citizens regard these ethnic minorities as invaders for their country although they are also American citizens that have the same rights and duties of those native citizens. Ali commented on the play's ironic title in the February 2011 issue of *American Theatre* and maintained that it "refers to hundreds of years of alleged inherent acrimony between the West and Islam. I wanted to reframe that within this multi- hyphenated Muslim American family" (97).

The dramatist used verbal irony in many situations in the play to show the different characters of these family members or crusaders. Besides making a comic effect, this verbal irony helps the characters to criticize each other and prove the validity of their own view-points. The mother, for example, makes fun of her argumentative daughter and calls her "Ms Barrister"(6). Salahuddin, sarcastically, describes his sister as "Webster's Dictionary" when he talks about her outspokenness and the sophisticated language she uses (8). He also depicts the quarrels between his mother and his sister as "The battle of the hijabi versus the non-hijabi..." (7). He makes fun of Fatima and her friends who are "wasting [their] time on this newfound Muslim Justice League" as well as in the university demonstrations they organize and describes them as "insane, jihadi penguin squad" (10). Salahuddin also describes his mother as being "a third world dictator" because she likes to impose her opinions in some situations, especially those relevant to the meals she cooks for them. Salman calls his wife "Mrs. Freud" because she always tries to analyze the characters of her family members (77). Kulsoom describes a white-skinned American girl as "Ms White Hourain" to show how far a Pakistani man is impressed with her (29). Ghafour, ironically, called Fatima "Judge Judy" when she was trying to give him a piece of advice after his father had slapped him because he had decided to leave the Faculty of Medicine (67). He also described the meticulous inspection he was exposed to, at the airport, as "the Muslim-mammal zoo exhibit" (40).

Wajahat Ali also used some literary allusions to highlight the differences between these family members or crusaders. The maxim of the English philosopher, anthropologist, sociologist and theorist Herbert Spencer "Survival of the fittest and the smartest" was mentioned when Salahuddin was trying to convince his brother, Ghafour, to be powerful in order to be able to survive in this world. He advised him to be "a bull in this world. A bull among the cattle" because the "bulls of this world are the people who succeed..." (66). In addition, T.S. Eliot's line of verse "do I dare disturb the world", which is extracted from his poem "The Love Song of J.Alfred Prunfrock" (1915), was referred to when Salahuddin was asking his brother not to bother himself with reforming the world (66). Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* was referred to when Salahuddin was, sarcastically, describing the difficulty of having a harmonious relationship between an American wife and her Pakistani mother-in-law because of the differences between their civilizations (8).The dramatist also shows how the mother likes to hear Tom Jones' songs while she is cooking and cleaning the house. This highlights the attempts of these bilinguals to be bicultural, too.

Conclusion

This paper addresses the inquiry about whether the conflict between the East and the West is due to a clash of civilizations, as Huntington claimed, or to a clash of ignorance as Said stated. Through the analysis of Wajahat Ali's *The Domestic Crusaders*, it has been proved that cultural ignorance is the main reason of the clash between the East and the West. The play reveals how many Americans have been influenced by the orientalist approach to Islam, especially after 9/11. Similar to Huntington and his peers, these people do not see Islam's plurality and ignore its true nature. The playwright shows how portraying Islam as an enemy to the West negatively affects the relations between the two sides and discourages them to have any civilizational dialogue, as Huntington and his counterparts desired.

The second question that this paper raises is whether the tragic events of 9/11 certify Huntington's argument. The analysis of the play shows that these attacks did not take place because of any civilizational differences between Islam and the West, as Huntington stated, but because of America's unfair policy in the Middle East which led to the rise of anti-Americanism even in some Western countries that do not have any civilizational clashes with America. The play also proves that these attacks were launched to carry out the plans of some Muslim extremists, which completely differ from those of the common Muslims. The third

question is related to the objectives of the leaders and policymakers and whether they are similar to those of the masses. The play shows that the aims of the elites are not necessarily those of the common people in both the Muslim and the Western countries. The fourth question is relevant to the role of the American media, specifically after 9/11. The play exposes the media's misrepresentations and stereotyping of Muslims and condemns those passive Muslims who do not try to do anything to shatter these stereotypes. The final question is concerned with the discriminatory attitude that some ethnic minorities may practice against each other. The play shows how the marginalized and stereotyped can be rejected by their own people and the members of other ethnic groups as well as by *the superior other*. The dramatist tried to convey his messages by using some literary devices such as irony, metaphor, flashback and allusion.

The Domestic Crusaders is a real contribution to American Muslim theatre. In this play, Wajahat Ali presents a counter-thesis that refutes the argument of Huntington and those orientalist who portray a distorted image of Islam as a violent-prone religion. It also discusses some of the problems that Muslims have faced in America, particularly after 9/11 such as defamation, violence, oppression and lack of assimilation. The play also reveals that intercultural dialogue can put an end to most of these problems and bridge the gap between the East and the West.

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